Development (195 48) Department.

SERIES.

G.O. No. 4859

Dated 27-9-48

[Despatch Abstract.]

iculture - Grow More Food - All India Conference on Compost -
Recommendations - Government of India - Replied.

No.F..1-62/47M
Government of India
Ministry of Agriculture
New Delhi, dated the 9th January 1948.

From

S.K. Ghose, Esquire, M.A.,
Assistant Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture,
Government of India.

To

1. All Provincial Governments.
2. All Chief Administrations.
3. The Chief Secretary to H.E.H. the Nizam's Government, Hyderabad (Deccan), Hyderabad.
4. The Chief Secretary to the Government of Mysore, Mysore.
5. The Foreign and Political Minister, Gwalior, Lashkar, Gwalior.
6. The Dewan, Cochin State, Ernakulam.
7. The Dewan, Travancore State, Trivandrum.
8. Dewan, Baroda State, Baroda.
9. Dewan, Jaipur State, Jaipur.

Subject: All India Conference on 'Compost' held at New Delhi on 16th and 17th December 1947.

Sir,

I am directed to forward herewith a copy of proceedings in duplicate of the above mentioned conference and to request that steps may kindly be taken to give effect to the recommendations contained therein.

I have the honour to be,
Sir,
Your most obedient servant,

Sd. x x x
Assistant Secretary.

/True Copy/

ALL INDIA CONFERENCE ON COMPOST.

On the intiative of Shrimathi Mira Bohn a Conference of Provincial Workers and others interested in the Compost Programme was held in the Secretariat Buildings, New Delhi, on the 16th and 17th of December 1947.

The following delegates attended the Conferences:-

1) The Hon.Dr. Rajendra Prasad, Minister for Food and Agriculture, Government of India (in the Chair).
2) The Hon. Raj Kumari Amrit Kaur, Minister for Health, Government of India.
3) The Hon. Pandit K.D. Malaviya, Minister for Development, United Provinces.
4) Mr. S. Basu, I.C.S. Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture, Government of India.
5) Sardar Datar Singh, Vice-Chairman, Indian Council of Agricultural Researchh
6) Shrimati Mira Behn, Rishikesh (United Provinces).
7) Shri B.M. Piplani, Deputy Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture, Government of India.
8) Mr.K.D. Bhatia, I.C.S., Development Commissioner, United Provinces.
9) Mr. Shiv Kumar Sharma, Bijnor (United Provinces).
10) Shri Dharam Pal, New Delhi.
11) Dr. C.N.Acharya, Chief Biochemist to Government of India.
12) Dr. Das Gupta, Health Department, Government of India.
13) Mr. Puri, Transport Department, Government of India.
14) Dr. B.N. Lal, Provincial Biochemist, United Provinces.
15) Dr. K.G. Joshi, Provincial Biochemist, Central Provinces and Berar.
16) Shri G.L. Patil, Compost Officer, Bombay, Government.

The GoverConference was opened by the Hon. Dr. Rajendra Prasad.

2. Sardar Datar Singh, Vice Chairman, Indian Council of Agricultural Research, in welcoming the delegates and requesting Dr. Rajendra Prasad, Minister for Food and Agriculture to open the Conference mentioned that as a result of researches carried out under the auspices of the Indian Council of Agricultural Research at Bangalore a suitable Process was worked for the Composting of town Refuse in India; and this scheme which is now supervised by the Government of India, is operating at 600 Municipal Centres in India producing about 5,00,000 tons of compost per year but the scope for extending the work is immense, since there are nearly 4,000 towns in India which can produce about 100 lakh tons of manure. In the villages a good portion of dung is wasted as fuel, while we are losing nearly Rs.100 crores in importing food - stuffs from abroad. A portion of the above sum if it had been spent in increasing the quantity of manure prepared in villages would have not only met our food requirements but would have also improved the fertility level of our soils.

3. There are huge quantities of cow dung going to waste in our cities, gowshalas and grazing areas. The Sewage and Sludge available in our towns is not being utilised for increasing our agricultural production. It sounds bad economics to leave our resources undeveloped while we continue to import increasing quantities of chemical fertilizers and of food-stuffs year by year. The progress achieved so far by our urban and village Compost Schemes represents barely 1 to 2 per cent of our potential resources and all our attention should be concentrated in the first instance on developing the above resources as rapidly as possible.

DR. RAJENDRA PRASAD.

The Hon. Dr. Rajendra Prasad said: It is a matter

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of great pleasure to be to preside over this Conference. We have had various experiments in the past with different kinds of manure which will help to Grow More Food, Whatever may be the individual merits of the different kinds of manure, there is one thing that is sure about farmyard manure viz. that it not only helps to improve yields, but also keeps up the fertility of the soil through the humus added. As such, there is no question that farm-yard manure is one of the best forms of manure to be used. There is alsothis much to be said in its favour that it can easily be made. We do not require big factories or large land for this purpose. It gives wealth with little effort, If only we knew how to utilise all that is wasted today, like waste of time, waste of energy, waste of material, waste of food, and last but not least the waste of what we call waste, a great amount of our problem will be solved.

5. Sardar Datar Singh has given you figures with regard to the amount of Compost being prepared at present, but up-till now we have touched only the fringe of the problem. We have been using farm yard manure from time immemorial but we have not yet realised the importance of every bit of cow dung wasted. I am told that not more than one third of the dung is being utilised as manure, the remaining two-thirds being either burnt as fuel or otherwise wasted. If the remaining two-thirds could also be utilised, we could meet our manurial requirements without any difficulty. The question is how we can do it. Cow-dung is now being used for fuel not because our people do not know its use as manure but because they have no other alternative. If we can give them some alternate fuel, I think, a great amount of cow dung can be kept for manurial purposes. Attempts have been made in certain places to have quick growing trees which would give us fuel, but it requires land for growing the trees and we have to wait for several years before the trees become fit to be used as fuel. My own idea is that as an alternative, we should devote some of the cultivated land for growing crops whose stems can be used for fuel e.g. castor, maize, cotton and even sugarcane. Our Agricultural departments should carry out research to find out such crops as would give us fuel as well as fodder and food. Arhar (tur) is an example of such a crop.

6. There are other things which reauire our attention Cattle urine is wasted almost wholly at present. Simple methods of absorbing the same in ash or earth should be introduced in villages. Attempts should be made to conserve human excreta in villages by opening trenched latrines. Villages co-operative societies may very well undertake this work. Village bhangis can make a living out what different. All the refuse should be converted into compost. The problem of the utilisation of cow dung accumulating in the cities is essentially a problem of transport.

produced in cities the problems some-

7. The work detailed above has got to be carried out mainly by the Provincial Governments. Taluks Committees and Village Committees should be made to supervise the work proceeding in their respective areas. Pandit K.D.Malaviya recently inaugurated a Compost Week in the United Provinces under which each village was asked to dig at least one trench and fill it up with compost. Similar propaganda drives would have to be organised in every province. This is a type of work falling in line with the people and easily accepted by them, once the Government is able to convince the people of the advantages of compost making. The Government of India is prepared to back up the proposals that may be put up by the provinces for the above subject.

SECOND DAYS PROCEEDINGS.

8. The Conference resumed its session at 9 A.M.

on the 17th December 1947, with Sardar Datar Singh, Vice-Chairman, Indian Council of Agricultural Research, in the Chair.

9. The Conference formed a Central Compost Development Committee consisting of non-officials and officials with Dr. C.N. Acharya, Chief Biochemist, Ministry of Agriculture as Secretary, which could act as an advisory body to the Central and Provincial Governments in the matter of Compost Development. A number of resolutions were passed urging on the Central and Provincial Governments to accelerate the present rate of production of Compost from urban and village refuse material. It was estimated that a complete utilisation of our indigenous resource would give us about 12-15 million tons of extra food-grains and also proportionate quantities of fodder for cattle. This would help to meet the present estimated deficit of 4-5 million tons of food stuffs in the country. 1

10. During the course of the discussion, the Hon. Pandit Malaviya mentioned that a compost drive has been started in the United Provinces which is expected to yield an extra 48 million tons of Compost. Dr. Acharya pointed out that the Chief limiting factor for increasing compost production at present (especially of urban compost was transport and motor trucks were in short supply for the purpose. Mr. Puri of the Transport Ministry promised to give necessary help of his Ministry in securing the supply of motor trucks for the purpose.

11. The members of the Conference later met Mahatma Gandhi in the afternoon. Mahatma Gandhi gave his blessings for the success of the work undertaken by the Conference and while doing so humerously remarked that a good work needs no blessings from him, but if the work was bad, he should not bless it and his blessings would turn into curses.

12. The following is the best of the resolutions passed by the Conference:-

1. This Conference is of the definite opinion that the Compost Programme offers vast potentialities for increasing food production in the country; thus a systematic utilisation of urban wastes would yield about 10 million tons extra manure; similarly a more efficient utilization of our village wastes would add a further 100 million tons of manure, while a programme for providing alternative fuel in place of cow dung would release another 200 million tons of manure; an implementation of the above programme would thus result in the production of an extra 310 million tons of manure which would increase our food production by about 12-15 million tons per year as against our present estimates deficit of 4-5 million tons and at the same time provide additional fodder and help to improve the fertility level of our soils.

11. This Conference has reviewed the work carried out so far under the existing schemes for Composting urban and village refuse and feels that while the work has shown steady development during the last three years, the results achieved so far which represent only 1 - 2 per cent of the total potential capacity should be considered insignificant and it urges on the Provincial Governments the need for accelerating the pace of the existing schemes, so that:-

(a) under the urban compost scheme, all municipalities notified areas and town committees are brought under the scheme within the next two years and developed to their full production capacity; and

(b) under the village compost scheme, at least 10% of the total number of villages in the Province are taken up during 1948-49 and an additional 10% are taken up in each succeeding year.

III. In regard to the Town Compost Scheme, this Conference makes the following recommendations:-

(a) In view of the present food situation it should be made obligatory on all municipalities, notified areas and town committees that they should convert the whole of their refuse material into compost ~~the~~ and for this purpose the facilities required by them by way of expeditious acquisition of land, procurement of transport etc. should be provided by the Provincial Governments: and the municipalities or notified committees should be prohibited from selling uncomposed refuse or night soil to farmers,

(b) The Health Department of the Government of India are requested to issue a directive to Provincial Governments (Local Self Government and Health Departments) recommending to them the adoption of the compost system in preference to other methods of disposal of refuse and strongly urging prohibition of sale of uncomposed night soil or kathchra to farmers.

(c) For the disposal of the compost prepared in town areas the help of multi-purpose Co-operative Societies or Taluks Development Associations or similar existing bodies near town centres should be availed of, more actively than at present.

IV. Regarding the Village Compost Scheme, the Conference recommends that:-

(a) The scheme should preferably be operated through Village Panchayats, Kisan Sabhas or Village Co-operative Societies; and in order to help such village organisations with technical advice, demonstrations and training in compost-making and also for the purpose of sending periodical reports a Compost Supervisor should be posted for each group of 10 villages.

(b) Where the villages possess insufficient or nor land for preparing compost, a common land should be acquired by Government for the purpose in the immediate vicinity of the village.

(c) In order to popularise the composting habit among the younger generation of villagers, a practical course in composting should be included in the syllabus in all primary and secondary schools situated in villages; and demonstration pits should be kept in routine operation in each school.

V. The Conference considered in detail the problem of conservation of village night - soil and urine and recommended in this connection that simple dry methods should be adopted for this purpose; and appointed a sub-committee consisting of Shrimathi Mira Behn, Shri Shiv Kumar Sharma, Dr.B.N. Lal and Dr.K.G. Joshi (with Dr.B.N. Lal as convenor) to prepare an outline Scheme which could be recommended to Provinces.

VI. This conference desires to draw special attention to the huge stock of cow dung that ~~the~~ lie unutilised in grazing areas, goshalas and cities and urges ~~as~~ that special schemes should be drawn up and operated by Provincial Governments for utilising the above stocks.

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VII. In addition to the Schemes mentioned above, tl Conference recommends that suitable Schemes should be drawn up and operated in each Province for:-

(a) the agricultural utilisation of town sewage, sullage and sludge,

(b) the utilisation of the by-products of the slaughter house and other trade wastes e.g. wool wastes, mill wastes, leather wastes etc. and

(c) for the composting of other materials like water-hyacinth, sugarcane trash, press mud, forest leaves etc., in cases, where village co-operative societies or individuals do not come forward to utilise the ~~compo~~ above materials, it would be advisable to prepare the compost under Government auspices till non-official agencies take it up.

VIII. This Conference is of the opinion that tran port has been the chief limiting factor for rapid expansion of the compost scheme and urges on the Government of India and on Provincial Governments to give all necessary help to composting organisations in getting sufficient number of mot trucks for the purpose. It also strongly urges that the tru at present in use by different Government Departments should also be ~~tu~~ utilised whenever possible for compost distributi Transport by canal may also be considered wherever possible.

IX. This Conference urges that intensive propaganda should be carried out among farmers to point out the value o compost manure and for this purpose it urges on the Central and Provincial Governments to arrange for carrying out the above progaganda through the medium of ballads, dramas, radi talks, lantern slides, films, posters, pamphlets, exhibition stalls, demonstration plots, lecture tours etc. Existing fie publicity vans, newspapers, journals and other media should also be utilised for this purpose.

X. In order to implement the above recommendations an expanded programme of work, the Conference recommends that:-

(a) an all India organisation known as the Central Compost Development Committee consisting of non-officials and officials and comprising the delegates attending this Conference as a necleus, with Dr.C.N. Acharya as Secretary, be formed, which would act as an advisory body to the Central and Provincial ~~Provinces~~ Governments for the purpose. And meet periodically in different provinces

(b) Each Province should have a Compost Development Officer who would be in charge of the urban and rural compost work and allied manurial schemes in the Province, including the distribution of fertilisers and oil cakes; and the staff at the All India Headquarters should also be adequatel strengthened in order to cope with the expanded programmes.

(c) In view of the importance of the Compost Programme sufficient funds should be allocated by the Central and Provincial Governments for implementing the above recommendations and for this purpose, the schemes already included under the five-year development plans have to be suitably amended.

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Development Department.

Letter No. Ms. 4859, dated 29-9-48.

To

The Secretary to the Government of India,
Ministry of Agriculture, New Delhi.

Sir,

Sub: Agricultnre - Grow More Food - All India Conference on compost - Recommendations.

Ref: Your letters No.F.1.62/47M dated 14-1-48 and F.1.62/47 dated 1-7-48.

With reference to your letter cited, I am directed to state that this Government support the recommendations in generally. I am also to state that in accordance with the recommendations of the conference the question of appointment of a compost development officer and the constitution of a Provincial Compost Development committee, in order to implement the recommendations are under considerationof Government. The question of introducting legialation for compelling /al municipalities and major panchayats to convert all refuse materi into compost, as recommended by the Central Manure (compost) Development committee at its meeting held at Nagpur on 5th to 7th July 1948, is also under ~~their~~ consideration. I am also to state that according to the Madras Land Requisition and Acquisition Bill 1948, which is now before the Provincial Legislature, land can be requisitioned for compost making by Municipalities and Panchayats Boards and for thee planting to provide alternative fuel for the public.

your most obedient,
Sd. x x x
23-9-48.

Copy
To the Director of Agriculture, (with reference to his letter No. L.1.501/48, dated 12-6-48,and 675/48, dated 8-7-48.

/True Copy/

Development Department.

Memo. No. 7301 AIII/48-16, dated 25-9-48.

Sub: Agriculture - Grow More Food - Compost - All India conference on compost - Recommendations.

Ref: From the Director of Agriculture, No.L.1.510/48, dated 12-6-48.
From the Director of Agriculture, No.L.1.675/48, dated 8-7-48.

The Director of Agriculture is informed that the question of appointment of a Biochemist as Provincial compost Development Officer in under the consideration of Government. If the compost Development Officer is not appointed within one month, the Director of Agriculture should ask one of the Head quarters Deputy Director of Agriculture to take up the work and submit concrete proposals for implementing the recommendations of the All India Conference on compost.

2. With reference to item (2) in para 2 of his letter second cited, the attention of the Director of Agriculture is invited to the Madras Land Requisition and Acquisition Bill, 1948 (copy enclosed) which is now before the Legislature. As the requisitioning of land for compost making by municipalities and panchayat Boards and also for tree planting to provide alternative fuel can be brought within the scope of the provisions in the Bill, the Government consider that no separate legislation is necessary for the purposes mentioned in item (2) in para 2 of his letter second cited.

Sd. x x x
23-9-49.

To the Director of Agriculture with (K) in orginal
Rural Development one month.

(K) that legislation should be passed in the provinces for the expenditious requisitioning of land for common purposes of the village including compost making and tree planting for fuel on the model of the United Provinces Rural Development (Requisitioning of land) Act of 1948.

/True Copy/

Office Assistant,
Madras Record Office.

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